



The Story Guy

Mary Ann Rivers

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In this eBook original novella, Mary Ann Rivers introduces a soulful and sexy tale of courage, sacrifice, and love.

I will meet you on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park. Kissing only.

Carrie West is happy with her life... isn't she? But when she sees this provocative online ad, the thirtysomething librarian can't help but be tempted. After all, the photo of the anonymous poster is far too attractive to ignore. And when Wednesday finally arrives, it brings a first kiss that's hotter than any she's ever imagined.

Brian Newburgh is an attorney, but there's more to his life... that he won't share with Carrie. Determined to have more than just Wednesdays, Carrie embarks on a quest to learn Brian's story, certain that he will be worth the cost. But is she ready to gamble her heart on a man who just might be The One... even though she has no idea how their love story will end?

Includes a special message from the editor, as well as an excerpt from the Loveswept title *Flirting with Disaster*.

The Story Guy Details

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From Reader Review The Story Guy for online ebook

willaful says

At an emotional low ebb in her usually pleasant life, librarian Carrie comes across an intriguing personal ad: one lunchtime meeting a week for kissing only, no dating, no hookups. Carrie is as struck with the man's photo as his ad -- handsome, dimpled, yet curiously self-protective -- and starts to weave a fantasy around him:

"Of course, maybe it isn't just Wednesdays. I have the sudden fanciful notion that maybe on Mondays he meets a stranger to just chat. Tuesdays, he meets another for hand-holding, then Wednesday he meets one for kissing, and so on, until Saturday. Saturdays he meets a woman for *fucking only*, completing the entire mating dance with six different women, with an excruciatingly prolonged bout of foreplay. Sundays, of course, are his day of rest."

(This is completely wrong, of course, yet there's a small element of truth to it. The writer of the ad, Carrie will discover, has had to compartmentalize his life very strictly.)

Carrie answers the ad, and her first kissing date with Brian confirms her strong attraction to him. (And I have to say, he worked just fine for me, as well):

"'You have a librarian fetish?' I don't mind. Not at all.

'Who doesn't?' He laughs again, and for the first time, there's a little blush, right under where his eyeglasses kiss his cheekbones."

[Swoon.]

But Carrie is startled to discover just how firm Brian is about holding onto his rules, despite how well they hit it off. Her friend Justin suggests that he sounds like "a story guy" -- "a good guy with a bad story doing something stupid." He doesn't see that as a negative thing though: "Story guys are like life highlighters. Your life is all these big blocks of gray text, and then a story guy comes in with a big ol' paragraph of neon pink so that when you flip back through your life, you can stop and remember all the important and interesting places."

Brian *is* a good guy and he does have a bad story. But what he's doing is wrenching and painful and beautiful. Or as Justin puts it, "When I said you should go for Story Boy I didn't realize he was a Russian novel."

I was happy that Carrie puts a lot of thought into this complex, messed up relationship. She decides at the beginning that because her life is so good, it's a risk she can afford to take: "If I'm broken, the break will be clean and easily mended. If he breaks, I'm not sure if there will be enough pieces to approximate. I can afford to go along with what he thinks will protect him." But it's harder than she expected. After a kissing date, her small apartment seems lonely instead of cozy. "No real food, no wine. No cats. No plants. No good music, no housekeeping. It's like the saddest version of *Goodnight Moon* ever." And no matter how hard she tries to stick to the rules, she keeps asking for more.

And when Carries realize how truly difficult maintaining a relationship with Brian will be, she ponders again, and once more gets advice from Justin: "Carrie, would you like to know this part of yourself? ... The part that opens herself up to a man based on nothing but a little intuition... Because you don't have to. Your

life is a nice one -- there are no guarantees, but it's on the right path to stay a nice one. Brian is not on this path." A nice path indeed, Carrie realizes, a path that "will never lead to a man whose hands shake when he holds my face for a kiss that feels like falling."

The plot of *The Story Guy* allows -- demands -- a slow physical build-up with delicious anticipation, making it an incredibly sexy read. The love scenes are fresh and exciting and intensely emotional.

This was an intensely emotional read all around, for me. It probably won't make every reader burst into tears, but it has a lot to offer anyone.

Karla says

4 Stars! Unique lovely story!

I would have liked it to go on for just a little bit more, not only because the story was so unusual, beautiful and heartwarming, but Brian and Carrie were the best kind of hero and heroine. Two inherently good people with huge hearts! They made each other stronger, and accepted what the other brought to the table, despite the impact it might ultimately have on their relationship.

The HEA is left to the imagination, but you know it is meant to be. Oh yeah... and I cried, the so-glad-they-found-each-other cry!

Regina says

There are some romances that make a reader smile. There are some romance novels that steam up glasses. And there are romances that make a reader cry from joy and again from sadness and then again from joy. *The Story Guy* is all of these and more. I could not put this book (or my kindle ..) down. There are some romances where everything is too easy. There are some romance novels that end almost too perfectly happy and the problems just disappear. And then there are some romance novels that purposely break your heart. *The Story Guy* is none of these. It is an emotional ride, it is beautiful and it is rewarding - but never easy or convenient.

Novellas do not often completely suck me in, but *The Story Guy* did. From the first page I was in this world; I was invested and I could not (and did not want to) let go. In her guest blog post at Badass Book Reviews, author Mary Ann Rivers discusses the challenges and benefits of writing a novella compared with a full length novel. She admits it is challenging but in a novella she can take risks as a writer. Those risks paid off in *The Story Guy*.

The set up is not entirely new and but yet it is completely unique. The main character Carrie is a working woman with strong friendships but not in a romantic relationship. She is stuck in a rut and cannot seem to get out. To pass her insomnia, late at night she reads personal ads online, one night -- one of these ads catches her eye. This is where the unique begins. The dialogue in *The Story Guy* is smart, intellectual and witty. I want Carrie and her friends to be my friends. The importance of a strong backdrop to the romance means that the story was so much richer and more complex. While the romance was the focus, the story was rich because of the characters beyond just the hero and heroine.

Read *The Story Guy*. You will not be disappointed.

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Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

"Story guys are like life highlighters. Your life is all these big blocks of gray text, and then a story guy comes in with a big ol' paragraph of neon pink so that when you flip back through your life, you can stop and remember all the important and interesting places."

This was such a sweet, beautiful, enjoyable book. I almost never read contemporary chick lit of this sort, but I've heard a lot of good things about this little book and I was drawn in. It is a novella, in any case, roughly 100 pages, not a significant investment of time.

Usually in the contemporary women's lit I've read, the main character's life is pretty shitty. The main character is pretty SOL when it comes to career, life, love, and is dissatisfied with every aspect of her life. This is not the case with our main character. Carrie is best described as *normal* with a normal life. She is a librarian probably in her late 30s, with a nerdy, bookish sense of humor (her email address is librariansdeweyitbetter@villagemail.com, and her IM handle is lieberries). Oh, and she has a tattoo.

"It's PS3568.A854 W4837 2003. The Library of Congress call number for Wilson Rawls's book *Where the Red Fern Grows*."

I loved the shit out of that book as a child. Marry me, Carrie.

She is in her late 30s, has a satisfying job at the library where she reigns over her kingdom of teen collections, has a satisfying relationship with her friends and loved ones. She dates around, but nothing too seriously. Carrie enjoys her life, it's a good life...but suddenly, she feels a sense of restlessness. You could call it a mid-life crisis of some sort, but it's nothing so drastic. Carrie just needs something a little different, a little routine to break the monotony of her day.

"When it comes to sex, I admit to feeling empty.

The feeling is like those shiny gourds they sell this time of year that look so fat and heavy but are actually paper light, with seeds and strings rattling around inside. My life is cozy, but I'm starting to let myself think I want something wet and aching stabbed through it. I want something substantial. I want to gorge myself. Excess."

Enter MetroLink, the book's version of Craigslist. One of her guilty pleasures (actually, one of mine too, sometimes) is to browse through the men's personals. She reads through them, savors them like a candy bar. Carrie's description of the ads, are dead-on, from the frat bros seeking a one-night stand, to the painful poseurs, to the men seeking BBWs, to the seniors.

"I usually skip those of the seniors, who seem to mainly post long and unparagraphed essays filled with ellipses and metaphors about spoiling a mistreated and much younger woman. Even worse are the painfully short single-sentence pleas that manage to cut open the loneliness of widowerhood or divorce after a long life with one woman."

Then, she comes upon Brian's ad. Kissing only. No touching her below the shoulders. Wednesdays. Nothing more. His photo draws her in, he is a handsome man, and there's something about him that intrigues her. She replies. They meet for a steamy encounter that leaves her wanting more, but he backs away, just as promised in the ad. They exchange IMs, they talk, they share their story, their innermost emotions and thoughts. Carrie even asks Brian about why he doesn't want anymore than "just Wednesdays," and he answers truthfully, but always holds something back.

Usually, this is the point in the book where a guy is holding off on commitment and I slam my hands down to internally screech at the main character "GET THE FUCK OUT OF THIS, GIRL, THIS MAN IS NOT WORTH IT." But you know what? I didn't. The way Brian is portrayed, all the injured, hurting, holding-back parts of him, seems absolutely sincere, even before we get to a reason. I *like* Brian. Before we know anything more about him, I just really liked him through their conversations, his sincerity, his honest desire for Carrie, all that makes me feel like I'm rooting for a guy who is not your typical asshole looking for a reason not to commit. He is a complicated, sweet, loveable man, and I loved both of them so much. His story is heartbreaking, and their love is complicated and well-earned.

Highly recommended for a quick, light read to brighten your day.

Jacqueline says

[(And so

Steelwhisper says

Came up in friend discussions. Leery because a) tearjerker and b) I've absolutely no tolerance for the US-dating-stuff

----- there be spoilers below -----

Oookay. The tearjerking jerked no tears at all, instead I was middling-to-majorly exasperated with this book and the concepts behind it.

First off, the formatting is really off, and the proofreader needs glasses. At times my kindle version was barely readable. Authors: don't get inventive with typesetting and formatting. Just stay with the norms, okay?

Then...

My distaste for melodrama in romance fiction has risen exponentially multiplied by the time I have been reading it.

I. Do. Not. Care. For. Overblown. Drama.

Especially such which is crammed into a tiny booklet sideways for the fun of it. I don't get "teh feelz", I get book-hate instead practically immediately. If an author so very clumsily, and so very OBVIOUSLY tries to manipulate my emotions they lose my every respect. I don't read to have that done to me. I do not enjoy it. If the story itself can't engender emotions in me, the story and characters are lacking something which no amount of artificial infusion of drama will cure.

Then, something which by now seriously astounds me. I mean, I read reviews before I bought this book. And these reviews state how nice a girl Carrie is, how wonderful the love for Brian and his for her, yada yada.

Fact is, it is lust, not at all love which is described here. It can't be love, not even falling in love (until the last quarter of the book), because those two barely know each other. Have people ceased to be able to tell what is what? How come?

Next, why do authors portray every single woman roughly within reach of their 30th birthday, or even past it, as wannabe mothers keening for babies and hearing their biological clock tick loudly? Not only that marriage as an institution is on a steep and steady decline these days, no, there are also a lot of women who don't want children, as in never ever. I'm so dead tired of the super-reactionary m/f romance ideal for women I could puke. Are these suckers exclusively written for women who marry and henceforth are interested only in church, cooking and children? Authors: look up REACTIONARY SHICE. And while we're at it, all serious reviewers should also look it up. Good grief!

The sex wasn't erotic. I expected whatnot after reading reviews, but the sex itself was nothing to write home about, the typical frumpy clit-oriented stuff you get to read in erotic romances where authors want to show readers they know what for a clitoris is. Sorry again: not every woman works like that. Anyone who wants to know how phone sex scenes can be interesting better watch the movie with David Duchovny. This one was boring instead.

I don't know either how much respect I should have for a man who (view spoiler)

I did like the basic idea though. One might have achieved something brilliant with it. Alas, not in this case.

Last but not least, I wish authors would get over this present tense fad, especially present tense 1st POV. It grates like chalk on a board.

namericanwordcat says

This is a very special book. Poignant, beautifully written, crafted, and sizzling hot. The wonder of this book is that is not fantasy really as so many romance novels (rightfully so) are. The author says she writes about the people standing in line in front of her for coffee and she does. There is no escapism in this book except for the escape into possibility and choice. Grand romantic stuff.

Written in the first person from the view of our awesome librarian heroine, the love story is tender, emotional, and sexy as hell. The hero is complex, conflicted, gorgeous inside and out, hot and real. The heroine is funny, self reflective, and emotionally brave. They are the best kind of people with the best kind of love--ordinary and extraordinary the way most people are.

This book has something for every romance fan angst, dirty talk, instant messaging, making out, wit, romantic gestures, and more.

The writing itself is so very, very good. The pacing is excellent, descriptions absorbing, character development round, lush, and gripping, the use of metaphor perfectly sets an exact world, worldview, and moment. Clearly, I will be stalking this writer's future work.

I do think that this book mirrors Ruthie Knox's Big Boy a bit in its basic premise but I prefer to think of these likelinesses as the characteristics of the personal ad meeting theme more than anything else and as both books are so very good there is no harm.

This book would have been perfect with an epilogue. I know that this is a short novella but a juicy ripe epilogue would have made this story a rereading favorite for sure. Maybe on the writer's website...hint, hint, hint..

I am thrilled to have found this new writer. I can't wait to see what she writes next. I highly recommend this book and will be singing its praises most loudly.

I was given this book for my honest review. So, there you have it.

Mandi Schreiner says

The first person to recommend this book to me was Claudia, but since then I've seen a lot of buzz about this book and for good reason. Mary Ann Rivers gives us an emotional, moving, sometimes funny, sometimes sad book about two strangers who start with a simple kiss and end with much, much more.

Carrie West is a librarian who is just plain lonely. She has friends, she has great parents and a good job. But after a few years of not dating she is in a funk. Her loved apartment feels too small and she finds herself breaking down in tears in random places. She enjoys reading the personal ads on MetroLink, a website where you can pretty much post anything. They are usually a bit more seedy than a normal dating site and Carrie often finds them amusing and more honest. One catches her eye:

I will meet you on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park. Kissing only. I won't touch you below the shoulders. You can touch me anywhere. No dating, no hookups. I will meet with you for as long as you meet me, so if you miss a Wednesday we part as strangers. No picture necessary, we can settle details via IM. Replay back with "Wednesdays Only" in the subject line.

And in a rush of craziness, Carrie emails him, and he responds. With much anticipation, nervousness and fear, Carrie meets him at the park for an hour of kissing. It changes her life.

Brian is an attorney who craves and needs human contact. He has a big thing going on in his life, that doesn't give him much time for anything fun or relaxing. But he can steal away an hour from his lunch to indulge. I'm not going to tell you what is going on with him, as Carrie is left in the dark for a lot of the book as well. But it's quite impactful and when you learn it you will go, ahhhh. I understand now. Brian and Carrie have this instant chemistry, one that Carrie yearns to pursue, but Brian just can't. He can't do more than just kissing her above the shoulders because he knows what will happen if he lets his heart fall for her. But that darn heart has a mind of its own.

This story features two mature, responsible people who both realize that even though you are falling in love, it's not simple. It's not always filled with rainbows and happiness. Carrie realizes something big is going on with Brian, and she wants to convey to him so much that she can wait or do whatever it takes to make his life easier

If I'm broken, the break will be clean and easily mended. If he breaks, I'm not sure if there will be enough pieces to approximate. I can afford to go along with what he thinks will protect him. I can have this, and I can give him what he thinks he needs, even if he may deserve better, Even if I don't know if he actually does.

That statement says so much. For a man she only meets to kiss on a bench, she is ready to give so much to him. I found there are so many powerful moments in this book like this.

For all the seriousness this book is so damn sexy. There is kissing on a bench and phone sex and real sex. It's really hot. And parts made me giggle too. Carrie has friends who help her navigate through this ordeal and they are fun and supportive. Carrie herself is a hoot as we get this only in her point of view. Her internal monologue can be very entertaining.

In 120 pages, Mary Ann Rivers writes a powerful love story. I immediately went to download her back list and then realized this was her debut. I can't wait to see what she does next.

Rating: A

Karen Wellsbury says

I've owned this book for so long, and I've out off reading it for almost as long - about 2 years !

Lots of reasons why not, all related to the time this was recommended to me, not the book itself ! But last night I was flicking through my TBR and opened it.

I read this in one go, hooked from the beginning by the combination of the writing, characters who read like actual people, and the lovely lovely love story.

Carrie meets Brian via an interesting ad - meet on Wednesdays, he will touch you only above the shoulders, you can touch him anywhere. Carrie is a librarian, and Brian has a secret.

Of course it becomes more than kisses in the park on Wednesday, as Carrie takes a risk and Brian lets go, and its tender and warm and funny.

Loved it

Las says

I went back and forth between a 2 and 3 with this one. Ultimately, lovely writing and an enjoyable premise couldn't make up for the plot and what I felt were weak character motivations. The more I thought about the story, the more those things bothered me.

Carrie is a 30-something single woman who's feeling a bit low emotionally at the start of the story. She has a good life--loving parents, friends, nothing really to complain about, but loneliness has started to set in. One night as she was perusing the personal ads on a craig's list-like site for laughs, she came across an ad by a

man looking for someone for kissing only on Wednesday afternoons. Intrigued, she answers the ad, and after an IM conversation she and Brian decide to meet. The attraction is instant and mutual, the kissing fantastic, and Carrie almost immediately decides she wants more.

And that's where the story starts to lose me. After two make out sessions, a few flirty IM conversations, and seriously hot phone sex, Carrie feels entitled to Brian's emotions. She insists on crossing boundaries that he very clearly delineated from the start. I couldn't get past this, and it colored how I viewed every one of their interactions from then on.

Brian is a lawyer in a job he hates. He's been his sister's sole caretaker since he finished law school. Stacy suffered severe brain damage when she was 17 due to a car accident. Their mother couldn't/wouldn't care for Stacy well, and left the state as soon as Brian took over her care. Having no one other than home health aides and an adult day care facility to help him, he's completely consumed by his caretaker role, and doesn't see room in his life for anything else. Every decision he's made in his adult life has been based on how best to accommodate his sister's need, and his Wednesday kissing sessions is a way for him to find some relief without risking emotional involvement. He's so attracted to Carrie that he goes ahead and makes the leap, but I never really believed that he was ready to do that.

The first person POV does Brian a huge disservice. Because while he tells Carrie about his negative feelings about his life, she has such a romanticized view of his caretaker role that we never see him being anything less than perfect. The writing gets a bit overwrought and frankly sappy at this point of the story. Stacy is used as a tool to show us how great Brian is, and because Carrie is so smitten we never see the reality of how difficult things can be. Carrie tells us, sure, but because she sees it all as evidence of what a wonderful man Brian is, I don't get the sense that she really sees Brian and Stacy as actual, complex individuals that exist outside of her feelings for him. Like when Carrie gives Stacy a bed bath:

I whisper to Stacy all the things I loved about her brother, and asked if it would be okay if we shared him. I told her she would always be his little sister, but that I'd like to hang out with him too.

And when (view spoiler) :

This is, of course, the privilege of love, to bear witness to a strong man's grief over the little sister he could never save, as much as he tried to, with every moment of life.

And this:

To live with that fear, and never have any confirmation that anything you did was the right thing? It's astonishing, every kiss he's ever given me.

And that completely unsubtle language makes up the entire final third of the story. It felt very melodramatic in some points.

In the end, I was unsure of Brian and Carrie's feelings for each other. Did Carrie cling to the first good man she lusted over to end her loneliness? After the all-consuming role of sole caretaker, could Brian really be

able to adjust to an equal partnership so easily? I can't tell.

SueBee★bring me an alpha!★ says

★★★★ ½! **The Story Guy** (stand-alone novella). A poignant, sweet & beautifully told tale about Brian & Carrie who set out to meet for kissing sessions in the park on Wednesdays!

“Story guys are like life highlighters. Your life is all these big blocks of gray text, and then a story guy comes in with a big ol’ paragraph of neon pink so that when you flip back through your life, you can stop and remember all the important and interesting places.”

The Story Guy is the poignant and sweet tale of Carrie West, a corky librarian and Brian Newburgh, an attorney, who at first glance comes across as enigmatic and peculiar. But he is so much more than that! In fact he wrapped himself around my heart and moved me to tears. **His secret will unfold with their story.**

“I will meet you on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park. Kissing only. I won’t touch you below the shoulders. You can touch me anywhere. No dating, no hookups. I will meet with you for as long as you meet me, so if you miss a Wednesday we part as strangers...”

That is the ad that Brian posted and Carrie answered. And so their story begins. They meet in the park at noon on a Wednesday and they kiss. **Kissing Brian is an experience; a combination of tantalizing passion, captivating skill and erotic abandon!** Though Carrie can touch him everywhere it quickly becomes clear that the one place she wants to affect, his heart, is untouchable. **Follow them as Carrie sets out to learn Brian’s story...**

“It’s so easy to be consumed by this shamelessness with him. The way he kisses, let alone the way he touches me, is so sharply present that it is impossible to think about anything other than the one single second in front of me. With Brian, maybe all that we have is this single second in front of us.”

Brian Newburgh: attorney (BRFCA)/30’s/dark brown hair/green eyes/glasses.

Five words to describe **Brian:** Unforgettable, noble, sexy, sweet and enigmatic.

Carrie West: Librarian/30’s/brown hair/glasses.

Four words to describe **Carrie;** Quirky, endearing, loyal and safe.

The Story Guy is a novella, beautifully told from Carrie’s POV. **Profound, poignant, captivating and heart-wrenching!** Brian and Carrie will wrap themselves around your heart. Though their story left them in

a good place I very much wish it would continue. **Excellent job Ms. Rivers! I highly recommend!**

“If I’m broken, the break will be clean and easily mended. If he breaks, I’m not sure if there will be enough pieces to approximate. I can afford to go along with what he thinks will protect him. I can have this, and I can give him what he thinks he needs, even if he may deserve better.”

Hero rating: 4.5 stars

Heroine rating: 4.5 stars

Sex scenes rating: 4.5 stars

Storyline concept rating: 4.5 stars

Storytelling skills rating: 5 stars

Story ending rating: 4 stars

Overall rating: 4.5 stars

Would I re-read this book: Yes!!!

Would I read future books by this author: Yes.

My sincerest thanks to Baba for introducing me to this story: Her review.

Baba says

4.5 beautiful, different and inspirational stars.**Review completed July 14, 2013**

I know the man in this gif is too old to be the hero of The Story Guy, but please leave a girl her little fantasy.

I will meet you on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park. Kissing only. I won't touch you below the shoulders. You can touch me anywhere. No dating, no hookups. I will meet with you for as long as you meet me, so if you miss a Wednesday we part as strangers. No picture necessary, we can settle details via IM. Reply back with "Wednesdays Only" in the subject line.

'There is always this moment, when you take a woman home just to take a woman home, some moment right before it could get awesome but you don't know yet if it will, that you, or

maybe not you, but me, gets all still inside. Quiet. And for me, that moment always seems like it lasts forever. And it's enough time for me to live some kind of life from that moment to the end of time and back again. With this woman I've taken home or gone home with, with my one-night stand, someone who isn't mine, but for that one crazy long heartbeat, I want to be mine.'

Brian hardly ever sleeps.

We need glitter and sparkle in our lives...you just need to meet the right person.

That's so true...

Two strangers--a librarian and an attorney--meet on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park at the shelter very close to a bank of water fountains. Kissing only. Due to very specific circumstances Brian is not available for dating and hookups, let alone a true commitment and love. So, this is how Carrie meets Brian, her story guy. Though it's a story guy with certain development potentialities. The ending is happy.

"A story guy?"
(view spoiler)

"You were the first thing I had asked for, just for me, in a long, long time."

My review will be rather short yet sweet.

Baba expels a whisper of breath...beautiful. Once in a while you pick up a little gem, and there is no denying it, I was very pleasantly surprised by The Story Guy. It was an almost perfect little read and most certainly a breath of fresh air. The author made the inconspicuous tangible. Wonderful.

35,000 inspirational words

Written in first person POV present tense, the most outstanding feature about The Story Guy is the author's voice. It reads like poesy at times and I know it's not everybody's cup of tea but it clearly worked for me. I absolutely love *that*. Granted, the premise and execution of the plot is different too and I enjoyed it very much. Hence, the novella was on its way to a most remarkable five-star rating when the somewhat excessive weeping as well as the heroine's liability to being a bit melodramatic during the second half of the story made me downgrade it to 4/4.5 stars. Besides, I could have done without the ILYs. They did not have to be voiced. Yet.

'I think it's...rare, to get exactly what it is you ask for. I haven't dated, seriously dated, in a long time because I felt like without even meaning to, I was making some kind of request for some specific kind of love, and instead of that love, the love I needed, I would get another kind. Like, I would need...daisy love, you know, pretty love, sweet love that nonetheless was ubiquitous in roadside ditches in the summertime, and instead I would get orchid love. Love that needed misting and replanting and pruning and fertilizing and died anyway. So I stopped asking, and it was okay, except I've been feeling like I don't have enough...of something. I don't know. And I found your ad. And you put it right there in black and white what you were asking for. But it occurs to me, I don't know if I am what you were asking for. And I haven't been asking for anything.'

The Story Guy is about two individuals wearing glasses. And let me tell you glasses are sexy.

Also, a bike plays a major role in this little story.

Overall I really loved The Story Guy. The MCs are interesting, the plot is good and the writing is stellar. Plus, the (view spoiler) deliciously good and I enjoyed the whole atmosphere of the story as well as the touch of humor that the author staged skillfully. Mary Ann Rivers clearly delivered an entirely satisfying debut. More please.

He clears his throat. "Carrie?"

"Yeah, Brian?"

"Librarians totally dewey it better."

And here is a little explanation by author Mary Ann Rivers about librarians who dewey it better.

So yes, the Dewey Decimal system would be one Carrie was very familiar with as a librarian. In the US, too, the most common way for "librarian" to be mispronounced is "lie-berry-an." Also, in the US, there is a kind of joke about your profession "doing" things better. Like, "nurses do it better," just meaning that of all the

things anyone could do, your people will do it better. SO, Carrie's IM name is a joke about all of these things. "Lieberrians dewey it better."

Jill says

At thirty though Carrie's feeling comfortable with her life, happy in her job as a librarian, she also feels she's lacking something. Scanning the personals she comes across an intriguing ad from a guy who wants to meet up on Wednesdays in the park, promising kissing only.

As a work of general fiction this reads very well. As a romance, not so much. The premise of two people meeting for kissing only on a Wednesday lunch hour sounded somewhat odd and desperate, but interesting enough. And different. I like different.

Similar in many ways to Ruthie Knox's Big Boy it lacked the pull and sexual tension that Big Boy offered. The emotional angst that Brian feels is written very well, but I couldn't help but also feel that he should have/could have asked for help. Deliberately taking on the care and shouldering the burden *alone* and in the process isolating himself from any help or pleasure in life seemed a little extreme and masochistic.

Now I don't have to have my heroes all alpha, I like a bit of mix in my heroes, but Brian came off a little *too beta*. And Carrie comes off as a chaser, desperate for the relationship to continue and advance.

The writing is lovely. The story engrossing. The kissing/sex scene/s steamy.

Bottom line, I enjoyed this author's writing and the *story*. And I'll definitely read her next novel. However, the romance here didn't work for me. Other readers may well enjoy this, it's rating very highly and for only \$0.99 it's certainly worth the read.

Steam: 3.5

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

I will meet you on Wednesdays at noon in Celebration Park. Kissing only.

This isn't the kind of story I'd normally pick up, but there was something about the idea of two lonely souls meeting once a week to share stolen kisses in the park that sent my imagination flying. I couldn't stop wondering what would compel Carrie and Brian to enter into such an arrangement. It sounded so tawdry, so shallow, and yet, so heartfelt and hopeful, and honestly, I simply couldn't resist finding out what brought them to this point in their lives.

My Thoughts -

It doesn't often happen that a book takes me completely by surprise, but *The Story Guy* is one that did. I had no idea where this relationship between Brian and Carrie was going - if it was going anywhere at all - but what starts out as a sexy, intriguing, quirky tale, soon becomes a poignant, impassioned, sensual love story that I couldn't put down. It's a fairly short read but what it lacks in page count it more than makes up for with complex characters, a deeply moving story, and the promise of a beautiful, destined, *happily ever after*.

I wish we had been given an epilogue of some sort, something to show us where Carrie and Brian will be 5, 10, 20 years down the road. And believe me, this not a criticism, but a testament to how much I came to care about them both.

I'm looking forward to reading more by Mary Ann Rivers, a truly gifted writer.

My thanks to Random House/Loveswept and Netgalley for granting me a copy of this story in exchange for an honest review.

Alicia (is beyond tired of your *ish) says

Well, here I am on my lonely island of unpopular opinion yet again. It seems everyone adores this novella and I was left unfulfilled and somewhat irritated by the experience.

I loved the premise of the story. It was unique, certainly nothing I've ever read before. The fact this story starts with nothing but kissing and not straight to sex with a stranger excited me to no end. I knew when I heard that was the case that I had to read this. Unfortunately, I think that created an expectation for the story in my mind that wasn't met. The story was not as sweetly innocent as I had hoped it would be. It sort of skipped over the build up that could have been amazing between the two of them and almost straight to Carrie wanting to "fuck" (her words) Brian and trying to force a situation that could have evolved naturally and been more satisfying. I really think this needed to be a full length novel so that it might have realized that potential.

I really hope this trend of first person adult books, especially romance, dies a swift death. And soon. Especially first person present, which is just the worst narrative form. It's extremely limiting and I don't buy into the fallacy that the reader gets a more intimate view of the character. I don't think we gain anything being in a character's head. In fact, I end up more annoyed when something incongruous runs through the character's mind. The writing in this novella could be overwrought at times where it attempted to be lyrical and insightful but only fell flat for me. Here we were trapped inside Carrie's mind and I found myself asking, "Who thinks like this?" several times. There were a few instances where she or other characters attempted profundity but it just didn't make a lot of sense to me. Even the explanation of what a "story guy" is was toeing the line of ridiculous.

Then there are first person sex scenes, which I generally find awkward. I just don't want to be in someone's head for that. Especially with the use of some euphemisms. Those of you who have been reading my reviews know the one about which I'm going to complain. Yep, the dreaded "sex" as a euphemism. Feel free to weigh in here but has anyone ever actually referred to their vagina as "my sex"? Ever? It's bad enough reading that in third person but when it's the character talking it's even worse. Particularly when she is saying "clit" and "cock" all around that other term. Why can't she use a word people actually say? I know people think "vagina" sounds too clinical, but she used "penis" almost as much as "cock", if not more. Then there was a paragraph that not only used *that* term but where she also said "cum". It was like the paragraph from hell. Really, the sex scene in this book was needlessly explicit. It tempered the potential sweetness of the story. Instead of being loving and romantic, it kind of long-jumped into somewhat brash erotica. And, of course, the more explicit the more potential there is for cringe inducing word use that ruins the scene for some

people. It was also way too long for a novella. I don't know how long it actually was but it *felt* like it went on and on. I remember saying, "Why is this sex scene 32 pages long in a hundred-something page novella?" That was obviously hyperbolic but exactly what I was thinking.

I'm not sure how I feel about Carrie. She wasn't awful, I got her, but she was a fairly flat character. She had very little conflict. I think she was driven by loneliness, which is something with which I can easily relate, but I still didn't feel much for her. The thing that really irritated me about her was the fact that she pushed Brian for what she wanted between them. He was very clear from the beginning about what the relationship was and where it was going yet Carrie kept pushing then acted like he owed her something and was refusing to give it to her. She at least had some self awareness and referred to her behavior with him as bullying. But why, recognizing that, did she continue to push instead of understanding that he was trying his damndest to move past his limitations for her? To try and give the connection and chemistry they had together a chance. It was obvious he was suffering some secret pain. Her selfishness only served to make her unsympathetic. She had an attitude like he was leading her on when in reality he was explicitly clear with her from the start. I think eventually she was going to have to push some because he was stalled in his life and couldn't see the potential for change, but it could have waited beyond a whole two Wednesdays. That was too fast for her to think that he should give her all of himself because of some great kissing. This issue might have been created, in part, by keeping this to novella length instead of a full novel.

The worst part of this being in first person is not getting any of the story from Brian's perspective. He was very sweet and so tortured. His conflict was really interesting and deserved to be explored. Leaving it to fester in the periphery did a disservice to the character and the reader. I truly wanted him to have his say. Brian had lived his life a certain way for a long time for a very good reason and never thought he could have more, didn't really believe he deserved more. He had to work through the issues and repercussions of changing his version of normal. Traveling with him through that journey would have been far more interesting to me than Carrie's one dimensional whining. Reading this story from both of their perspectives would have made this a much more enjoyable and emotional read for me.

2.5 stars. I was looking for a sweet, romantic story and I didn't feel like I really got that but for some parts where the potential shone through. ~~I am tempted to round my rating down, but rounded up for the great premise and for Brian even though he didn't get his say. Though don't be surprised if I do change it. I'm still not sold on leaving three stars up there.~~ Yes, I changed it. I was bothered by giving it three stars and usually my mind comes up with reasons why I should leave it but I could only think of reasons why I should round down, that's when I know I should go ahead and do so.

I was provided an ARC of this book through NetGalley.

*I lost the entire first draft of this review after the first two paragraphs, so this is not as complete or as good as it was initially. I hate everything.
